

REMARKS

Interview Summary

Applicant thanks Examiner Kiknadze for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview conducted with Bill Isaacs, Applicant's representative, on February 14, 2006. During that interview, we discussed the features of independent Claim 23 that distinguish the claimed invention from the documents cited in the Office Action dated December 16, 2005. As discussed in detail below, the cited documents do not teach or suggest, either alone or in combination, at least the feature of an x-ray source and an image processing device arranged on a U-bow and displaceable in a transverse direction relative to the U-bow. Applicant understands that the Examiner agreed that the cited documents do not disclose that feature.

Pending Claims

Claims 1-32 are pending in the present application, with Claims 1 and 23 being independent. Applicants have not amended any of the claims herein.

Allowed/Allowable Claims

In the Office Action dated December 16, 2005, the Examiner allowed Claims 1-22. The Examiner also stated that Claims 27 and 28 are allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has not rewritten those claims in independent form because Applicant submits that Claim 27 and 28's underlying base claim (independent Claim 23) is patentable, as discussed in detail below.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 23-26 and 29-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,285,772 to Rattner ("Rattner") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0048732 to Wilson et al. ("Wilson"). Applicant respectfully traverses those rejections.

Independent Claim 23

Applicant submits that the documents cited by the Examiner fail to teach or suggest, either alone or in combination, at least the feature of an x-ray source and an image processing device arranged on a U-bow and displaceable in a transverse direction relative to the U-bow, as presently recited in independent Claim 23.

The Examiner stated in the Office Action that Rattner did not teach that feature. See the Office Action at p. 3. For that feature, the Examiner relied on Wilson, citing to Figure 2 and paragraph [0025]. See id. Wilson relates to an x-ray scanner. The x-ray scanner includes a gantry support 20 supporting a plate 21 on which a C-arm structure 24 is supported. See paragraph [0023] and Figure 2. The C-arm structure 24 is supported on the plate 21 at a bearing 26 and a curved rail 27 for rotational motion of the C-arm structure 24 about bearing 26. See id. The plate 21 is further supported along rails 28 on the gantry support 20 for moving the plate 21 up and down. See id. The C-arm structure 24 carries an x-ray source 30 producing a beam of x-rays and an x-ray detector 32 aligned with the x-ray source 30 to receive that x-ray beam. See id. The gantry support 20 is mounted on a movable platform 12 via rails 22 to move the gantry support 20 along the short dimension of a patient table 18. See id. The movable platform 12 is mounted on rails 14 of a fixed support 10 to move the gantry support 20 along the long dimension of the patient table 18. See id.

As described, the gantry support 20 can be moved left to right in Figure 2 (along the short dimension of the table 18) by moving on the rails 22. See paragraphs [0023] and [0025] and Figure 2. The gantry support 20 can be moved perpendicular to that direction (along the long dimension of the table 18) by moving the movable platform 12 on the rails 14. See id. Movement of the gantry support 20 moves the C-arm structure 24 together with the x-ray source 30 and x-ray detector 32 mounted thereto. Additionally, the C-arm structure 24, and therefore the x-ray source 30 and x-ray detector 32, can be moved vertically by sliding the plate 21 holding the C-arm structure 24 along the rails 28. See id. Finally, the C-arm structure 24, and therefore the x-ray source 30 and x-ray detector 32, can be rotated via the bearing 26. See id. and Figure 3.

Accordingly, the C-arm structure 24 can be moved, and the x-ray source 30 and x-ray detector 32 always move in conjunction with the C-arm structure 24. The x-ray source 30 and the x-ray detector 32 of Wilson are immovably fixed to the C-arm structure 24, as also described in Rattner. Thus, Wilson fails to teach or suggest moving the x-ray source 30 and the x-ray detector 32 relative to the C-arm structure 24. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Wilson fails to teach or suggest at least the feature of an x-ray source and an image processing device arranged on a U-bow and displaceable in a transverse direction relative to the U-bow, as presently recited in independent Claim 23.

Based on the above, Applicant submits that none of the documents cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest at least the feature of an x-ray source and an image processing device displaceable relative to the U-bow in a transverse direction.

Summary

For the reasons stated above, Applicant submits that independent Claim 23 is patentable over the documents cited by the Examiner. Additionally, Claims 22-26 and 29-32 depend from independent Claim 23 either directly or indirectly and are submitted to be patentable for similar reasons. The dependent claims also recite additional features further defining the present invention over the cited documents, and Applicant submits that the cited documents do not teach or suggest integrating those features into the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicant requests separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim.

Applicant has not addressed each specific rejection of the dependent claims because Applicant submits that the independent claims are allowable over the documents of record. Applicant has not acquiesced to any such rejection and reserves the right to address the patentability of any additional claim features in the future.

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits the foregoing as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated December 16, 2005. Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests such action. If any issues exist that can be resolved with an Examiner's Amendment or a telephone conference, please contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at 404.572.2809.

Respectfully submitted,



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